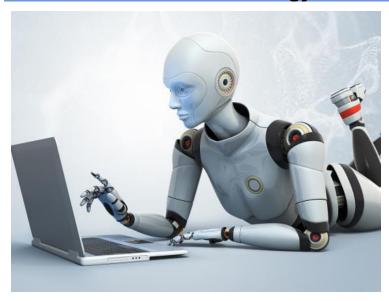# SOCI 242
Technology and Society

The aim of this course is to get students to think critically about the technological developments of the 21st century. Topics covered include the nature of technological artefacts and systems, technology and social disruption, technology and inequality, the social shaping of technology, and the role of digital media in relation to new forms of cultural identity and social control. We will also be considering the social challenges posed by artificial intelligence and their implications for what it means to be human.

Professor Bantjes

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Office Hours: Please visit me to talk about the course, especially if you are having difficulties.

- Monday 12:45pm – 1:45pm
- Tuesday 2:00pm – 4:00pm
- Wednesday 10:00am – 1:00pm

Classroom
SCHW 290

Readings
Perusall (https://perusall.com/)
Course Code: BANTJES-QXD7R

Assignments
https://moodle.stfx.ca/

Grading Scheme

Engagement with Readings (you need to pass this component to pass the course) – 30%
Participation in class – 8%
Research Proposal [or debate writeup] (Feb 14) – 12%
Research Essay [or debate] (Mar 14) – 17%
Final Exam – 33%

OUTLINE

1 – What is Technology? (January 18)
- Pro Robots. "20+ the Most Incredible Inventions"
- Quan-Haase. "The Technological Society "
- Mumford. "The Invisible Machine."

2 – Technology and Social Power (January 25)
- Winner. "Do Artifacts Have Politics?"
- Travers. "Technological Determinism"

3 – Technology and Social Class (February 1)
- Braverman. "Machinery."
- Srinivasan. "Steps to Automation."

4 – Technology and Gender (February 8)
- Cowan. "The 'Industrial Revolution' in the Home"
- UCL. "Gender and the Internet of Things (GIoT)"

5 – Technology and Human Nature (February 15)
- Clark. "Cyborgs Unplugged."
- Rosati. "Food for Thought
- McLuhan. "The Medium is the Message"
- British Institute of Posthuman Studies. "PostHuman"

- BREAK -

6 – Technology and Risk Society (March 1)
- Langston. "The Retreat from Precaution"
- Threadgold. "Ulrich Beck's Concept of the Risk Society."

7 – Information Technology and Social Possibility (March 8)
- Weinberger. "The Internet That Was"
- Castells. "The Technology Revolution"
- Botsman. "The case for collaborative consumption."
- The Feed SBS. "Maker Movement"

8 – Enclosure of the Digital Commons (March 15)
- Zuboff. "Big Other"
- VPRO Documentary. "Shoshana Zuboff on surveillance capitalism."
- CGP Grey. 2017. "How Machines Learn."

9 – Digital Democratization /Digital Authoritarianism (March 22)
- Rheingold. "Smart Mobs"
- Srinivasan. "Digital dissent and people's power"
- Harari. "Why Technology Favors Tyranny."
- Harari. "Will artificial intelligence create a useless class of people?"

10 – Platform Capitalism: Class, Race, Gender (March 29)
- Srinivasan. "Disrupting Jobs and Lives."
- Srinivasan. "Discrimination Technologies."
- Buolamwini. "Artificial Intelligence Has a Problem with Gender and Racial Bias."

11 – Technologies of Resistance (April 5)
- Waghorn. "Watching the Watchmen"
- Future of Life Institute. "Slaughterbots"

12 – The Automation of Love (April 12)

- Wolff. "Companion Sex Robots"